Barriers still limit the practice of kneeling, Merrill said. While American value. "It doesn't quite go along with looking good, which is a great American value," Merrill said. When kneeling was rejected by Puritans, said Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, there is a historical precedent for the posture in the revivacis of the earlyProtovangelist, a group that refused to recognize the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus excluded the practice of kneeling.

"While one may show deference to a part of the liturgy, the practice is not in public worship today except for the Avodah rite during Yom Kippur. Even on that day, only the service leaders may sometimes kneel or prostrate themselves.

It is part of the daily prayers of Judaism: "We bow the head and bend the knee before God," but not a knee hits the ground. "Aside from that one day each year when you re-enact ancient custom, the practice of kneeling has been eliminated from the Jewish liturgy altogether," said Rabbi Daniel Syme of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He said an idea in Jewish tradition that has grown stronger over the centuries is that Jewish people and God are partners in fixing the world. "While one may show deference to a partner, one doesn't bow down to a partner," Syme said. "Kneeling in the name of God means to have a covenant with God. "We are not worthy. We are worthy. So we stand face to face with God," he said.

The idea that "God is omnipotent" is promoted by some Jews. Rabbi Harold Kushner put it in his best-selling book, When Bad Things Happen to Good People: "...God would like people to get what they deserve, but He cannot always arrange it..." Kushner's position is that people are limited in what God can do by law of nature and human moral freedom.

It is probably this view of God that brought about the elimination of kneeling in the Jewish daily prayer. When God is no longer all powerful and is reduced to a mere "partner" of humanity, there is no need to humble oneself before Him. "This foolish and arrogant attitude--using Philip Kieran's words--is not surprising, in light of the Quranic verse 17:4. It fulfills the prophecy that the Children of Israel will fail to the extremes of arrogance. It also reflects a hyper-inflated ego which becomes a form of idolatry, a human trait shared by anybody who believes in God but ascribes partner status to Him.

According to the Quran, a specific way of prayer--salat (contact prayer)-- was practiced by God's messengers, from Abraham, Ismail, to Jesus as well as Muhammad (48:29, 21:75, 10:57, 19:31, 55). The correct practice of contact prayer involves not only acts of prostration but also the correct posture during prayer. More importantly, the contact prayer is observed to remember God and God only--to worship Him alone--because there is no other god beside Him (20:14, 72:18).

However, even among those who practice the salat today, i.e., the Muslims, speaking other names during the salat is the norm. This defeats the purpose of the salat. Unknowingly, they nullify their salat. Hence, even the correct posture during prayer can kill, no more than a mockery and an act of hypocrisy, as we learn in 4:35 and 4:42.

By discarding the words, "God is in Scripture, a large majority of Jews and Christians, as well as Muslims, have fallen into the category of those who lost the contact prayers" (98-99).

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A couple of weeks ago, I was driving in my car and heard a radio announcer commenting about newly released movies. I could tell by his voice that the announcer was a white American. Joking about Spike Lee's new movie "Malcolm X," he said: "That one is not for us!" I asked myself (although I knew the answer) who is the "us" he is referring to? Frankly, I found it quite interesting to hear someone unwittingly "broadcast" their group exclusiveness, denial, and fear of the legacy of "Malcolm X" with such a strong sense that the listening audience was in agreement.

Despite the fact that the man behind the "X" genuinely denounced all forms of racism near the end of his life, I also hear some African-Americans expressing hatred of whites in his name. Regardless of their reasons, it seems that many people currently cannot see or do not choose to see the man behind the "X." But, the "X" is in fashion--on hats, shirts, posters, mugs, just about anything that can hold impression and sell. But, the "X" cannot invite you to think and reflect on the man. Although no holiday has been set aside in his name, the man is and has been a hero to many minorities in this country and people from third world countries. There are also whites in America and abroad who recognize his contributions to the struggle for human rights and freedom for all people.

Who is the real man behind the "X"? The man behind the "X" journeyed from abject conditions of racism and poverty, coupled with crime in his early life to the attainment of the purpose of life. Engaged by racism and social injustice, and propelled by a drive to get "his share," he pursued ideals along his journey that he thought would bring dignity and happiness--money, drugs, women, and expensive clothes.

The man behind the "X" hated what was passed off as "religion." So much so that he was nicknamed "Satan" during his prison days. By denouncing the falsehoods, distortions, and hypocrisy of Christianity while in prison, the man was released from the group pressure to follow the practices of a misguided majority and minority--be it ethnic or religious. Yet, his thirst for spiritual direction did not die. He was invited and sought refuge in the Nation of Islam--a large group of self-supporting African-Americans who taught a combined doctrine of distorted teachings of Islam and reverse racism to nullify their imposed inferiority complex. Malcolm literally reversed the organization and its leader Elijah Muhammad until he realized Elijah's on-going hypocrisy. This was the biggest idol of them all, the toughest test for him in his journey.

His trip to Mecca to observe the Hajj pilgrimage had a dramatic effect on him. The following quote was taken from his autobiography as told to Alex Haley (Ballantine Books, New York, 1975):

"My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight. In two weeks in the Holy Land, I saw what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all races, all colors, blue-eyed blonds to black skinned Africans--in true brotherhood in unity! Living as one! Worshiping as one!"..."

He had promised himself never to follow any individual or teaching that proved to be false. Early on, he committed himself to the truth and sought it where he could find it. At any given time, the man behind the "X" tried to adhere to the truth as he understood it. But, upon realizing his false practices, he would readily give them up.

"In Mecca, too, I had played back for myself the twelve years I had spent with Elijah continued"
Muhammad so it were a motion picture. I guess, it would be impossible for anyone else to be in Muhammad's belief in Elijah Muhammad. I believed in him not only as a leader, but as a human being, but also I believed in his divinity, as a human leader. I believed he had no human weaknesses or faults, and that, therefore, he could make no mistakes and he could do no wrong. There on a holy hill, in the Jerusalem desert I realized how dangerous it is for people to hold any being in such esteem...

There is a psychological principle that the mere person commits himself to another, an organization, or belief that he can no longer go back from that person, group or belief that he sacrificed so much for. Most people simply deny any new found negative information about the people they admire. On the contrary, they strengthen their attachment to whatever they sacrificed for. In short, they are unwilling to admit that what they have risked to help, caused them to be mistaken or that they had expected.

I too, knew at the beginning of my own spiritual life that I could not then, and I could not do what I had been propelled to do. In our lifetime we are always a man when we believe in all facts, and to accept the reality of the way as a new experience and new knowledge. I believe that if I am truly a human being, then it becomes necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

Every night I can find, I did a lot of talking to say people whom I knew around here and Harlem, and I made a lot of speeches, saying: "Truth is taught me that it takes all of the religious, political, economic, psychological, and racial ingredients, or character-istics, to make the Human Family and the Human Society complete. "Since I learned the truth in Mecca, my dear-est friends have come to include all kinds--some Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, agnostics, even atheists! I have friends who are called capitalists, socialists, and communists! Some of my friends are moderates, conservatives, extremists--some are even Uncle Toms. My friends today are black, brown, red, yellow, and white!

I said to Harlem street audiences that only when mankind would submit to the One God who created all--then only would mankind ever have a peace in this world. And, I believe that God who finished the Job was sitting in a huge tent on Mount Ararat. As a Muslim from America, I was the center of attention. They asked me what the Haid had impressed me the most. One of the several who spoiled English asked me: They translated my answer--"my dear friends, that question was not the one they expected, it drove home my point. I said, "The brotherhood, the people of all moses, one, from all colors of the world, coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One God."

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that arises from its society's routine the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and eaten with people who were years old. I was surprised to see the fervent belief amongst all colors practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and what I have heard, and what I have absorbed, will enable me to re-arrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I always kept a close look on my beliefs, and facts, and to accept the reality of the way as a new experience and new knowledge. It is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

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